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*This bulletin, and back issues,*
*can be found in the Lotus Notes-based*
*United Nations Information System*
*on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) at:*
*http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/qpal/pub_bltn.htm, as well as*
*on the Internet (http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/qpal/).*

# I. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE; CHAIRMAN ADDRESSES LETTER TO SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

*On 5 February 1998, at its 235th meeting, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People opened its 1998 session with statements made by the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Committee and the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.*

*The Committee re-elected Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal) as Chairman. Also re-elected were Bruno Rodriguez Parilla (Cuba) and Ravan Farhadi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairmen, and George Saliba (Malta), as Rapporteur.*

*The Secretary-General's statement, as contained in press release SG/SM/6453-GA/PAL/773, and the statement made by Mr. Ka, translated from French, are reproduced below:*

Secretary-General's statement

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on your unanimous re-election to the leadership of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. This is a clear reflection of the Committee's appreciation for the consistent support that you and your country, Senegal, have given to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly reaffirmed the mandate of this Committee and of the Secretariat units which support its work. The Assembly also reviewed the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

Overall, the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance that the great majority of Member States attach to the role of the United Nations in the Middle East and especially to questions related to Palestine. They expressed their conviction that the mandates should continue during the transitional period of the agreements signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and until a final settlement is achieved.

The convening last year of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly was testimony to the world's deepening concern about the prolonged stalemate in the peace process. The international community remains determined to make a concrete contribution to the peaceful resolution of a conflict that has preoccupied the United Nations for over half a century.

Encouragingly, the past years witnessed historic developments in the Middle East, following the mutual recognition of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1993. Notwithstanding difficulties and delays, the parties have accepted negotiation as the most hopeful means to resolve their differences.

Regrettably, the developments of the last year have sparked concern that the fragile edifice of the agreements reached since 1993 is in danger of collapse. More than once, I have been compelled to voice sorrow and dismay at horrifying acts of violence against innocent civilians.

Those acts are the work of the enemies of peace. I have appealed to the parties not to let themselves be discouraged or distracted by the

actions of a radical few who seek to destroy the undeniable achievements of the peace process thus far.

The situation in the occupied territories has been aggravated by worsening economic conditions as a result of security restrictions. Further, there has been a deepening anxiety among Palestinians over the construction of settlements and its potential consequences for the final status talks.

Consequently, tensions are high and the situation could become fragile. I have called on the parties to take measures, in a spirit of partnership, to restore mutual confidence and resume negotiations in earnest.

I was encouraged by the recent meetings in Washington with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, aided by the personal involvement of the President of the United States, and by the agreement to continue these talks in the near future. It is essential that remaining obstacles to the resumption of the bilateral negotiations can be overcome.

I also hope that the parties, in accordance with the agreements already signed, will be able to make progress on other outstanding issues. The aim must be a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). I also hope that it will become possible to resume talks on the other tracks of the Middle East peace process.

It is essential that political and economic conditions be created that will support a lasting peace. To that end, we must strive to promote social and economic development and cooperative relationships throughout the Middle East region.

The United Nations has long played a crucial role in this effort through its agencies present on the ground, especially UNRWA. That is a role that has been strengthened and expanded in recent years with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People and the establishment of the Office of the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories.

Great challenges remain, however, particularly as deteriorating conditions on the ground have set back some of our endeavours. The continuing serious financial situation faced by UNRWA and the hardships caused to refugees by austerity measures must be addressed urgently in order to contribute to stability in the area.

I plan soon to visit Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, as well as the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. Besides meeting with the respective leaders to discuss issues relevant to the activities and objectives of the United Nations, I shall visit United Nations peacekeeping missions in the area, as well as the headquarters of UNRWA in the Gaza Strip.

The countries and peoples of the Middle East, at the centre of United Nations attention for so long, are of the highest priority to me. I look forward to listening to their hopes and concerns, and learning what more the United Nations can do to support their efforts for peace.

I should like to conclude by expressing once again my appreciation for the work of this Committee and my continuing commitment to support its endeavours.

Committee Chairman's statement
*[Translated from French]*

Mr. Secretary-General,
Ambassadors and colleagues,
members of the Committee,

Speaking for myself and for members of the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to convey to you our deep gratitude for the confidence you have once again shown in us by unanimously re-electing us to the Bureau of the Committee.

We are very moved by your decision because not only does it do honour to us, but it does honour to our countries and their leaders.

I can assure you that we shall make every effort to be worthy of this gesture of confidence and friendship. It imbues us with an even sharper sense of responsibility and obligation to strive to support the Palestinian cause and promote the progress of the Middle East peace process.

As Chairman of the Committee and on behalf of my country, Senegal, I will use every available means to carry out the mandate entrusted to us. I know that, as always, I will be able to count on each of the members of the Committee. I can attest, Mr. Secretary-General, to the personal commitment they have consistently demonstrated in implementing its programmes of work.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Your presence here today, despite your many duties, is a great source of satisfaction to all of us. It reflects the interest you take personally in the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

On behalf of the members of the Committee, I want to reiterate our deep appreciation.

In establishing the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on 10 November 1975, the United Nations General Assembly expressed its deep concern at the lack of progress in the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people. It also stressed that the question of Palestine was at the heart of the Israel-Arab conflict and that the final settlement of that conflict actually depended on the solution of that question.

Today, notwithstanding significant progress and substantial advances on the difficult road towards settlement of the crisis in the Middle East, we all agree that the situation in Palestine has reached a painful juncture and the peace process is in serious jeopardy.

The peace negotiations between the parties are at a standstill. Frustration and rancour are building up, driven by the deplorable living conditions of the Palestinian people, which are continuing to deteriorate.

We are all concerned by this situation, which could generate political and social tensions in a sensitive region. The many obstacles thrown up to block the implementation of agreements and non-compliance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions are in large measure the causes of this persistent tension.

The peace process became bogged down, to say the least, during 1997. Let us hope that 1998, being the fiftieth anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will prove more auspicious as the year when major initiatives were taken or planned by the parties to the peace process and by the United Nations in order to restart the negotiations.

In this context, the Committee remains determined to continue to share in international efforts intended to advance, step by step, the effective implementation of the commitments made by the parties beginning in Oslo.

In this same context, it is also important for the United Nations, as the body vested with the principal and ongoing responsibility for settlement of the Palestinian crisis, to continue to play a dynamic role in this critical phase of the peace process.

I know that this is what you would like to see as well, Mr. Secretary-General. It is also the wish and the hope of the international community and the overwhelming majority of Member States, which adopted important resolutions on the question of Palestine at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

I would not wish to conclude my statement without expressing the Committee's sincere appreciation to the United Nations Department of Public Information, the Division for Palestinian Rights, the members of the Office of the Secretary-General, and non-governmental organizations in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America for their support of the Committee's work and for their renewed commitment towards a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine based on the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In accordance with its mandate, the Committee will continue its efforts to raise awareness in the international community, during this fiftieth anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to ensure the triumph of the cause of the rights of the Palestinian people and to mobilize the assistance and support of the international community for the Palestinian cause.

To that end, I would note that, three weeks from now, in Europe, at Brussels, we are planning to hold a conference in support of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people organized jointly by the Committee, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States. We hope that several Governments will be represented at a high level by their Ministers for Foreign Affairs or by special envoys.

In conclusion, it is our hope that 1998 will be marked by tangible progress in the quest of the Palestinian people for their legitimate rights and for the construction of the future Palestinian State. We also hope that it will be crowned by important advances in the search for peace in the Middle East, a peace that will benefit all the peoples of the region.

*The Committee adopted its programme of work for 1998, which is reproduced below as contained in document A/AC.183/1998/CRP.1, dated 2 February 1998:*

Programme of work for 1998 of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People*

I. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

1. The mandate of the Committee for the year 1997 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 52/49, 52/50 and 52/51 of 9 December 1997.

2. In its resolution 52/49, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Committee; requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as appropriate, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-third session and thereafter. It also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and to take the necessary steps to involve additional NGOs in its work. The Assembly also requested the

* The programme was adopted by the Committee at its 235th meeting, on 5 February 1998.

United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and other United Nations bodies to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee.

3. In its resolution 52/50, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including for the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

4. In its resolution 52/51, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine", the General Assembly requested the Office of Communications and Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1998-1999, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America, and indicated a set of activities to be carried out under the programme.

## II. PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE FOR 1998

5. In its recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, the Committee expressed the greatest concern over the stalemate in the peace process and the exacerbation of tension and violence in the region. The Committee called upon the international community to intensify its efforts in support of the historic reconciliation process between the two sides and for the effective implementation of the agreements reached and for the resumption of the negotiations on the agreed basis. It also called for an end to the closures and other forms of collective punishment imposed by the occupying Power, which resulted in continuing deterioration in the economic situation and living conditions of Palestinians. It furthermore called for an end to the policy and practice of settlement in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

6. The Committee reaffirmed that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is reached in accordance with international legitimacy. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee plays a role of even greater importance pending the achievement of such settlement. The Committee stated that it would continue to do its utmost to promote the achievement of Palestinian rights and the full implementation of the agreements reached, and to mobilize international assistance for the economic and social development of the Palestinian people. The Committee called for even greater support and participation in its activities by all States.

7. The Committee expressed its full support for the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session and stated that it would continue to remain engaged in the follow-up to those recommendations and to promote the necessary action.

8. The Committee expressed the view that its programme of seminars and NGO meetings had performed a useful role in informing and mobilizing public opinion about the objectives and priorities of the Committee, and stressed the need to continue the programme and to intensify outreach efforts to NGOs. The Committee also emphasized the valuable contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights and requested the continuation of its various activities, including in particular its United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), the programme of studies and

publications, the training for staff of the Palestinian Authority and the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

9. The Committee also indicated its agreement that savings generated in the implementation of its programme of work should be redeployed towards the implementation of the Secretary-General's mandate for the modernization of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/129 of 13 December 1996.

## III. ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

### A. Action by the Committee

10. In implementation of its mandate, the Committee will continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to participate in relevant meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Committee will also continue to monitor the situation on the ground and draw the attention of the international community to urgent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, requiring international action.

11. The Committee, through its Chairman, will again participate in relevant meetings of intergovernmental bodies, as considered necessary.

12. The Committee will continue, in cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization, to expand its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including NGOs, in the areas under its jurisdiction. The Committee will consider inviting Palestinian officials and other Palestinian personalities to special meetings of the Committee on particular occasions, as required. The Committee will also give consideration to the possibility of sending a delegation to visit the Palestinian territory at an appropriate time.

13. The Bureau of the Committee will continue its consultations with countries interested in the programme of work of the Committee, including members of the European Union, with a view to promoting understanding for its objectives and greater participation in its activities.

14. The Committee, in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States, has convened a high-level Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to be held in Brussels on 24 and 25 February 1998. The Committee expresses its great appreciation to the Government of Belgium for having agreed to provide the venue for this important event and hopes that it will make a positive contribution to sensitizing international public opinion with regard to the continuing plight of the Palestinian people and the urgent need to achieve a just and peaceful settlement of this question.

### B. Seminars and NGO meetings

15. In accordance with the Committee's decision to streamline and refocus the programme of seminars and NGO meetings in the light of the evolving political situation in order to achieve maximum effectiveness, provision was made in the 1998-1999 programme budget of the Division for Palestinian Rights for the following meetings: an annual meeting of consultations between the Bureau and regional NGO coordinating committees; an annual seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people; an annual seminar or NGO symposium for the European region; an annual NGO symposium for the North American region; and a total for the biennium of three combined seminars/NGO

symposia for Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

16. The Committee will continue to strive, in cooperation with prospective host countries and institutions, and the competent Secretariat services, to limit costs for conference facilities, equipment and servicing staff, while ensuring the success of the meetings.

17. For economy reasons, and also keeping in mind other changes in the programme which resulted in earlier dates than usual for several NGC meetings, the Bureau decided not to hold the meeting of consultations with NGOs in 1998, without however setting a precedent for the future. In response to the wish repeatedly expressed by the NGO coordinating committees for the holding of the European symposium at Brussels and the International NGO Meeting in a Middle East country, rather than as a combined event at Geneva or Vienna as in the past, the Committee decided that these two meetings would be held in conjunction with the events to be held at Brussels and Cairo, respectively.

18. Accordingly, the calendar of seminars and NGO meetings to be held in 1998 will be as follows:

- The European NGO Symposium will be held at Brussels on 26 February 1998, immediately following the above-mentioned Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;

- The International NGO Meeting will be held at Cairo on 25 and 26 April 1998;

- The Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People will be held at Cairo from 27 to 29 April 1998;

- The Latin American and Caribbean Seminar/NGO Symposium will be held at Santiago from 26 to 29 May 1998;

- The North American NGO Symposium will be held at Headquarters in New York from 15 to 17 June 1998.

19. The Committee expresses its gratitude to the Governments of Belgium, Chile and Egypt for having agreed to provide the venues for the above-mentioned meetings to be held in their respective capitals.

## C. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

20. The Committee continues to attach the greatest importance to UNISPAL, which was originally requested by the Committee and mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991, and subsequent resolutions. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Division is continuing its efforts to make the system more comprehensive, and that provision for additional contractual scanning of documents was made in the 1998-1999 budget.

21. The Committee also notes with appreciation that the Division has initiated a home page on the question of Palestine, which is planned to include the most important UNISPAL documents, as part of the United Nations home page on the Internet. The home page can be reached at the following address: http://www.un.org/Peace/.

22. The Committee requests the Division to make all efforts to proceed with the full implementation of these projects on an urgent basis.

D. Research, monitoring and publications

23. In accordance with existing mandates and earlier requests of the Committee, the publications programme of the Division in 1998 will include the following:

(a) A monthly bulletin on activities by the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and others on the question of Palestine containing the texts of all relevant resolutions, statements and decisions;

(b) A periodic bulletin entitled Developments related to the Middle East peace process containing documents and statements relating to the peace process;

(c) A monthly chronological summary of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on news reports and other sources.

24. In addition, the Committee requests the Division to continue to prepare its informal periodic summary of information on significant activities of NGOs relevant to the question of Palestine for the information of the Committee and for communication to the network of non-governmental organizations.

25. The Division will also issue the report of the Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People as well as reports of seminars and NGO meetings; a special bulletin on the observance in 1997 of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; and a compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in 1997.

26. The Committee notes with appreciation that the Division has issued its study on The Status of Jerusalem as well as updated information notes on the work of the Committee and the Division, on the programme of cooperation with NGOs and on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

27. With regard to the studies on fundamental issues requested by the Committee, the Committee requests the Division to complete its work on the draft study on Israeli settlements.

E. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

28. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will be observed on Monday, 30 November 1998. It is envisaged that the observance will take place at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna and elsewhere in accordance with established practice.

29. The Committee will again commemorate this anniversary with a solemn meeting and other activities, including, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, the presentation of a cultural exhibit at United Nations Headquarters during the week beginning on 30 November.

*On 17 February 1998, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People sent a letter to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/134):*

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to refer to Security Council document S/1998/44, containing a summary statement by the Secretary-General on matters of which the Security Council is seized and on the stage reached in their consideration.

I should like to reiterate the Committee's objection to the decision to delete from the list items related to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, which are of utmost concern not only to the Committee but also to the majority of Member States. The Committee believes that, pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine, in accordance with international legitimacy, these items should remain on the list of matters of which the Council is seized, as they continue to engage its responsibility with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I should also like to stress our view that any decision to delete these items, in the absence of positive developments in the peace process, would go well beyond procedural reform and would have far-reaching negative political implications. On behalf of the Committee, I would like once again to express the firm hope that decisions of such fundamental importance will be taken in thorough consultation with all the parties concerned.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

## II. CONFERENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 24 AND 25 FEBRUARY 1998

*The high-level Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held in Brussels on 24 and 25 February 1998. The Conference was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States.*

*High-level officials attended the conference, including H.E. Mr. Erik Derycke, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the host country; H. E. Hennadiy Udovenko, President of the United Nations General Assembly; Sir Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and representative of the United Nations Secretary-General; H.E. Mr. Carlos Lemos Simmonds, Vice-President of Colombia, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; and H. E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority.*

*A high-level plenary was also addressed by H.E. Mr. Sadok Fayala, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia; H.E. Mr. Cherif Younouss Diaité, Ambassador, Director of the Cabinet of the Ministry for Foreign*

*Affairs of Senegal, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of Senegal; H.E. Dr. L. N. Sisulu, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa; H.E. Mr. Faruk Logoglu, Deputy Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey; H.E. Mr. Ahmad Mohammed Ali, President of the Islamic Development Bank; H.E. Mr. Simbarashe S. Mumbengegwi, Ambassador of Zimbabwe and Permanent Representative to the European Union, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Robert O. Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe and Chairman of the Organization of African Unity; and H. E. Mr. Nassir Alassaf, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Belgium, on behalf of H.R.H. Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia.*

*The Committee delegation was led by H.E. Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Committee Chairman. The delegations of the two co-sponsoring organizations were led by H.E. Dr. Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and H. E. Ambassador Said Kamal, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestinian Affairs of the League of Arab States.*

*A general exchange of views was held on the following themes: promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - a key to peace in the Middle East; the need to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promote economic and social development; and the Middle East peace process: the current situation and prospects. Eminent personalities spoke, including Ms. Shulamit Aloni, member of the Meretz Party and former Minister of Education of Israel; Mr. Nabil Shaath, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Palestinian Authority; Mr. Henry Siegman, Director of the US/Middle East Project and Senior Fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations; Mr. Harry Barnes, Jr., Director of the Conflict Resolution and Human Rights Programmes of The Carter Center; Mr. Michael Hindley, Member of the European Parliament (Labour, United Kingdom) and Co-Chairman of the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation; and Mr. Mohamed Abdellah, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the People's Assembly of Egypt. A total of 102 Governments, 9 United Nations bodies, 4 inter-governmental organizations, some 30 non-governmental organizations and a number of special guests attended the Conference.*

*At the end of two-day session, the three organizers of the Conference issued concluding remarks. The text is reproduced below:*

Concluding remarks by the organizers

1. The Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, held on 24 and 25 February 1998, in Brussels, coincided with the passage of 50 years since the beginning of the dispossession of the Palestinian people, as well as 30 years of the occupation of Palestinian lands in 1967 and 10 years since the start of the intifada, the uprising of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation. September 1998 will also mark five years since the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The aim of the Conference was to draw the world's attention to the continuing unjust and appalling situation faced by the Palestinian people, to the aggravating economic and social circumstances in the occupied Palestinian territories and to the threats and dangers to the whole region resulting from Israel's policies, practices and measures.

2. The Middle East peace process, which raised great hopes, has come to a stalemate due to the numerous setbacks and obstacles placed by the Israeli Government, its non-compliance with international law, United Nations resolutions and the agreements signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization, its inhuman practices and measures violating the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the continuation of its expansionist policy of illegal settlements, its attempts to alter the demographic, historical and cultural character and status of the Holy City of Al-Quds (Jerusalem), the economic blockade of the Palestinian territory, thus hampering the development efforts of the Palestinian people.

3. Whilst the world is celebrating this year the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, those of the Palestinian people continue to be denied by Israel and resolutions of the United Nations are being violated with impunity.

4. The participation in the Conference of many high-level governmental delegations, eminent personalities and representatives of United Nations bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations demonstrated the continued support by the international community for the Middle East peace process, based on the principle of land for peace and aimed at implementing United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable national rights and at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Conference also showed the determination of the international community to intensify its efforts to set the peace process back on all tracks, including the Syrian and the Lebanese ones. The organizers called upon the parties to abide by their contractual obligations under the agreements reached and to implement those agreements in a timely manner towards the realization of a final settlement. At this critical juncture, they also called upon the co-sponsors of the peace process to spare no effort in order to save it.

5. The Conference also showed overwhelming support for the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of their State, and reaffirmed that this is a primary prerequisite for the successful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the crux of which is the question of Palestine. The Conference also underlined that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories, including Al-Quds (Jerusalem), must be brought to an end without delay and mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence must be given an opportunity to flourish.

6. The organizers emphasized the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine till it is resolved in all its aspects in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international legitimacy and until peace is finally achieved. They expressed their appreciation for the role that the United Nations has been playing in this regard. They reaffirmed the crucial importance of the respective roles of their Organizations and agreed to continue their efforts within and outside the United Nations, in accordance with their respective mandates, with a view to achieving this objective. They called upon all participants to contribute to enhance their Governments' and the public's awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people and of the need to enable them to exercise their inalienable rights.

7. The organizers expressed their appreciation to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of African Unity for their continued assistance to and unflinching support of the Palestinian people. They were also grateful to the

members of the European Union for their positive position and invaluable economic assistance to the Palestinian people. They also called upon the international community to persist in this important endeavour.

8. The organizers welcomed the participation in the Conference of His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority. They expressed their deep appreciation for his sustained efforts and wise leadership in the quest for a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine, as well as a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

9. The organizers expressed their deep appreciation and profound gratitude to the Government of Belgium for having given them the opportunity to hold this Conference and to raise the above-mentioned concerns in Brussels, the heart of Europe.

## III. EUROPEAN NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 26 FEBRUARY 1998

*The United Nations European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in Brussels on 26 February 1998, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 52/49 and 52/50 of 9 December 1997.*

*The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka, Chairman; Mr. Ravan Farhadi (Afghanistan) and Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairmen; Mr. George Saliba (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).*

*The Symposium was attended by representatives of 44 Governments, 5 United Nations bodies and agencies, 2 intergovernmental organizations and 40 non-governmental organizations.*

*At the opening session, Mr. Ka spoke in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. A statement was made by Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations and representative of Palestine. The opening session was also addressed by Mr. John Gee, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP).*

*The invited experts made presentations in one plenary session, which was followed by a discussion. Mr. Marai Abdul Rahman, Secretary-General of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace; and Mr. Amnon Kapeliouk, Member of the Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, spoke on the Middle East peace process, its current situation and prospects. Ms. Isabelle Avaran, Secretary-General of the Association France-Palestine and Member of the French Platform for Palestine, made a presentation on the European position and the policy of the European Union. Ms. Fiona McKay, a lawyer with Redress, a London-based NGO, spoke on the theme "International law, world public opinion and the role of NGOs: a critical assessment".*

*The participating NGOs reaffirmed the NGO plan of action adopted at their last meeting in August 1997 in Geneva and adopted a final statement. The full text is reproduced below:*

Final statement

The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in the United Nations European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held in Brussels on 26 February 1998, express their deep concern at the stalemate in the Israel-Arab negotiations and, more particularly, those between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel.

The Declaration of Principles signed in September 1993, which defined the framework for these negotiations, based on the principle of land for peace, raised hopes for the construction of a just peace through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. It also raised hopes for the stability of the region and security founded upon the perspective of cooperation and not upon military force

The policy of the present Israeli Government is destroying these hopes, whereas the transitional period prior to the negotiation of the final status issues should have been used for concrete confidence-building measures.

Delays and difficulties had already accumulated prior to the election of the Government of Benjamin Netanyahu. Now, this Government rejects even the principles of land for peace: by its refusal to redeploy Israeli forces; by its intensification of the policies of land confiscation, demolition of houses, expansion of settlements and the transfer of Palestinian residents from Jerusalem, which empty the negotiation of real content. The closure it has imposed upon the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the non-implementation of the economic accords and agreements already reached have had a devastating effect upon the Palestinian economy. Thus, international aid only serves to meet an emergency situation instead of promoting sustainable development.

This policy of closures is unbearable for the Palestinian population affected by it and is counter-productive to true Israeli security. The same can be said for the infringements of the human rights of the Palestinians and of the Fourth Geneva Convention - among other things, the legalized use of torture - in the occupied Palestinian territories. Hopes for the return of the refugees to their homeland are non-existent while the Government of Israel persists in the intransigent stand.

The European NGOs share the concerns which have been expressed by the European Commission, but we believe that the European Union should take more decisive measures to ensure that Israel desists from pursuing the policies which are destroying hopes for peace.

The NGOs reiterate their commitment to a just and lasting peace based upon self-determination for the Palestinian people, an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital and the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

The NGOs, appreciating the gravity of the economic situation of the Palestinian people, urge that European Governments maintain financial aid to the Palestinian people while calling for the full lifting of Israeli closure measures; furthermore, we urge that they increase their support for UNRWA, whose operations are vital to millions of Palestinians.

The NGOs reaffirm their commitment to the action plan adopted by the United Nations European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine in August 1997.

The NGOs will pursue their work of lobbying their national parliaments and Governments, the European Commission and European Parliament as well as the Council of Ministers to urge that the European States and the European Union, at the political level, use the economic role which they have undertaken since the beginning of the negotiation process by conditionally freezing the interim accord signed between the European Union and Israel until Israel complies with all its political and economic commitments signed with the Palestinian side.

The NGOs will develop concerted efforts vis-à-vis their respective Governments for the implementation of United Nations resolution ES-10/3 and ES-10/4 for the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to help secure respect for this Convention in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

The European NGOs express their support for the initiative undertaken by the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW), in cooperation with the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, to organize a conference on "50 Years of Dispossession", which is taking place in Jerusalem from 7 to 10 June 1998.

The European NGOs express their appreciation for the work carried out by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

## IV. UNESCO DIRECTOR-GENERAL APPEALS FOR RESUMPTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS; ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION AGREEMENT SIGNED UNDER AEGIS OF UNESCO

*On 5 February 1998, the following press release was issued by UNESCO in Paris (no. 98/25):*

The Arab-Israeli peace process, which raised so many hopes as the late Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat shook hands on the lawn of the White House, has been all but abandoned. Time is running out, the momentum of the Oslo Peace Agreement has been all but lost; growing despair is giving rise to growing suspicion, tension and unbearable hardship which fuels extremism on all sides and lays the ground for future violence and bloodshed. The promises must be kept, the commitments honoured. Otherwise, the people - particularly the young - of the region and all those following the present fluctuating behaviour of actors involved, will become disillusioned, or - worse still - indifferent.

Trust and flexibility are the indispensable conditions for dialogue and peace-building. Unreasonable expectations and the quest for lasting conditions of non-conflict are not, and can never be, the basis for the "peace of the brave" so ardently wished for by all unless the agreements are observed.

The present situation is alarming, the seeds of peace are being allowed to rot in the ground and all of us must face our responsibility to put the Middle East peace process back on track. Time is working against us. If we do not act now, the Middle East time bomb may explode. It is therefore our duty to observe the workings of time, to revive the eroded

remains of the Oslo Peace Agreement. It is our duty to ensure that peace, the precondition for the exercise of all human rights, is established, to turn destruction into construction while this remains possible, before a flare-up. Such is our duty: to respect the ethics of time.

Let us not forget that during the last session of UNESCO's General Conference (November 1997) the international community adopted the Declaration on the Responsibility of Present Generations Towards Future Generations. UNESCO's 186 member States also committed themselves to study the draft declaration on the human right to peace, which sets out our obligation to ensure that peace prevails, to render possible the exercise of all those human rights which we, the international community, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 50 years ago.

In keeping with its principles, I call on the international community, and particularly on the European Union and States of the Arab region, to help the Palestinians open their trade routes and regain their dignity by assisting them in their capacity-building efforts to achieve sustainable development; build schools and universities; and repair and develop their eroding infrastructure and educational system.

UNESCO was among the first to demonstrate its commitment to the Middle East peace process. We sought to contribute to the Oslo Peace Agreement by organizing a meeting between Israeli and Palestinian intellectuals, Granada I (in December 1993). In the coming months a second such meeting, Granada II, will be held.

But our efforts will amount to nought unless the international community actively support and encourages the parties involved in the Middle East conflict to hear the voice of reason and return to the negotiating table in a constructive spirit for their own sakes, and for the sake of a better common future.

*On 27 February 1998, UNESCO issued a press release on the Israeli-Palestinian cooperation agreement (no. 98/39):*

A cooperation agreement in the fields of education, culture and science was signed on 26 February in Ramallah by Uri Bar-Ner, General-Director of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Palestinian Deputy Minister for Development and International Cooperation, Anis Al Qaq.

The agreement, drafted under the aegis of UNESCO and signed, on behalf of the Organization, by Daniel Janicot, Assistant Director-General for the Directorate, marks the launch of the Granada II process, which aims to contribute to peace-building between Israelis and Palestinians.

Granada II comes as the direct follow-up to the meeting between Israeli and Palestinian intellectuals which was organized by UNESCO in Granada, Spain, in December 1993. UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor said the process "aims to enable Palestinians and Israelis to contribute to building a future of peace by working together on cooperation projects under the auspices of UNESCO.

Granada II began in July 1997 with a meeting of Israeli and Palestinian education, science and culture experts in Jerusalem. Despite the tense

political situation, it was followed by technical meetings which identified about 15 cooperation projects. The agreement signed in Ramallah yesterday provides a permanent framework to this process, which will be launched officially next May or June, once the list, modalities and financing of the projects are determined. At the invitation of Mr. Mayor, a meeting should then submit these projects to the approval of the highest Israeli and Palestinian authorities.

The agreement stipulates that the Israeli and Palestinian education systems should be encouraged to reflect objective reciprocal knowledge and positive understanding of both peoples' religious and political concepts. Youth education is essential for mutual understanding and priority must be given to communication between universities operating in the fields of training and research. The new electronic technology can play a great role in the exchange of experience and transfer of knowledge, the agreement says.

According to the agreement, as regards sciences, the geographical constraints of the region - energy and water - oblige the parties to cooperate and to prepare common projects to control the use of energy and the management of water. The development of research and training, in particular in the fields of energy renewal, water desalination and management of natural resources, and participation in regional and international science networks, is recommended.

Stressing the cultural wealth of the Middle East, cradle of civilizations, the agreement insists that to safeguard any of the parties' cultural heritage means safeguarding the cultural heritage of all. The Governments in place are necessary interlocutors but the civil societies must also be taken into account, notably through cultural meetings. Activities in this field must respect cultural specificities and encourage dialogue between the religions.

Regarding communication, essential to generating public opinion, measures must also be taken to promote better understanding, notably by decreasing fanaticism and prejudice and encouraging education for peace, human rights and democratic values.

As the signatories stressed yesterday, the Granada II process is at present the only Israeli-Palestinian meeting and working forum to remain open.

## V. GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD) CONSIDERS ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINIANS

*The following are excerpts from a press release issued by IFAD on 10 February 1998 (see IFAD/SAG/2):*

The twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) will open on 11 February 1998. The Governing Council session will consider two innovative schemes to help some of the world's poorest people. The first would develop a fund for countries crippled by debt for reasons beyond their control. Another fund would provide financial assistance for projects in the West Bank and Gaza. The establishment of these funds will expand geographically and conceptually IFAD's operations, while continuing the tradition of innovation and inclusion that has encompassed the Fund's activities since the start of its operations in 1978.

The two-day session, which marks IFAD's twentieth anniversary, will be inaugurated by Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. Other key speakers will include President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and the President of IFAD, Fawzi Al-Sultan.

Statements will also be delivered by special guests, including: the former Prime Minister of France, Raymond Barre; the First Lady of Ghana, Dr. Nana Konadu Agyeman; and former IFAD Presidents Abdelmuhsen Al-Sudeary and Idris Jazairy. In addition, ministers of finance and of agriculture, as well as high-level delegations from 160 member States, will examine the Fund's budget and programme of work for 1998, which forecasts a record investment level of $459 million in new loans and grants.

...

The Fund's intervention in the Middle East reinforces efforts to bring stability and development to the region. The Council will discuss the establishment of a fund for Gaza and the West Bank in order to provide financial assistance for projects and the programmes for Gaza and for such areas, sectors and activities in the West Bank as are, or will be, under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority pursuant to the relevant Israeli-Palestinian agreements. The new fund would be authorized to conclude loan agreements with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), acting on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, and in line with new provisions of the Interim Accord (28 September 1995) between the PLO and Israel.

...

## VI. EUROPEAN UNION RELEASES STATEMENT ON ITS ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS AND ITS FUTURE ASSISTANCE

*The following is a press release issued by the European Union on 16 January 1998 (see DN:IP/98/37):*

The European Commission has just approved a communication to the Council of Ministers and to the European Parliament on the role of the European Union (EU) in the Middle East peace process. The aim of the document is to provide elements for a thorough debate within the EU on the present situation in the Middle East and the impact of the EU political and economic strategy for the region. The communication, therefore, provides an analysis of (i) the present situation of the Middle East peace process; (ii) the EU political and financial support to it; (iii) the interface with the Euro-Mediterranean partnership; (iv) the results of the EU economic assistance to the Palestinians; (v) the successes and shortcomings of the international aid effort and in its final part; and (vi) the complementary role of the EU alongside the leading role of the US in the process.

Executive summary of the communication

The Middle East peace process that was launched at the 1991 Madrid Conference raised great hopes of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

The Madrid Conference did not produce immediate progress. Nevertheless, it succeeded in triggering the mutual recognition and establishment of direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO

(Oslo channel). This led in turn to unprecedented regional progress towards peace, including the signature of a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority as an interim stage pending the conclusion of a permanent Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty by May 1999.

The EU reacted to this historical opportunity by making available the largest international programme of economic assistance to the peace process : ECU 1,680 million for the period 1993-1997. In parallel, the EU maintained its supportive complementary political role.

However, the political climate has changed during the last year and a half, moving from unprecedented hopes for and steps towards a comprehensive negotiated solution to a general climate of regional instability and impatience and alarm among the international community. The reality is that the peace process is in a state of persistent deadlock. The European Commission's viewpoint is that there is no possibility to make real and credible progress in the peace process without full implementation of all commitments freely accepted by the parties.

This continuous lack of political progress has begun contaminating other international initiatives aiming at stability and prosperity in the region (i.e. MENA, the Middle East and North Africa Economic Forum). Despite the heavy investment in material and economic resources made available by the European Union and the international community at large, it has become clear that regional cooperation and integration cannot make any headway unless there is real progress towards a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Doha conference has been the latest and most glaring symbol of the paralysis of all multilateral cooperation, with the big waste of financial and political efforts that it entails.

Most importantly for the EU, the crisis threatens the Barcelona process. Despite the fact that this forum for policy dialogue between the EU and its Mediterranean partners, launched in Barcelona in November 1995, has been the only forum where all regional actors have worked together over the last two years, it is clear that there is a growing contamination by the political crisis in the peace process of the activities emanating from the Barcelona partnership and of the accompanying measures of the Euro-Med Association Agreements.

As to the success and shortcomings of the international aid effort, the document explains that the international aid was intended to trigger sufficient private sector investment flows into the region, thereby truly improving the economic standards of the peoples in the region, notably the Palestinians. The EU massive programme of economic assistance seems to have failed to achieve its original goals. In fact, the opposite has happened: all Palestinian economic indicators point at a clear deterioration of living conditions. To mention just a few :

- Palestinian per capita GNP has fallen by over 35 per cent;
- Losses due to closures have taken up to 7.4 per cent of GDP per year;
- Unemployment has doubled, from 20 to over 42 per cent;
- Private investment has plummeted to one fourth of what it was in 1993;
- Yearly trade losses have occurred of up to almost US$ 300 million;

- Delays have taken place in the implementation of donor-financed projects.

All this reflects that, in the economic sphere, the efforts made since the Washington donors conference in 1993 have failed; this has caused widespread international donor fatigue.

Nevertheless, the unprecedented effort by the international community, and in particular of the European Union, has not been in vain; it has yielded some valuable achievements.

On the one hand, it has been instrumental in keeping the peace process alive. It has helped in the establishment of a Palestinian institutional capacity that allows the Palestinian Authority to carry out its basic functions in a satisfactory way. On the other hand, it has substantially upgraded the Palestinian physical and social infrastructure. Furthermore, aid has prevented standards of living for going into free fall due to very unfavourable economic conditions.

In short, the international donor effort has ensured the survival of the peace process. It has also created the conditions that may allow the Palestinian economy to bounce back once obstacles for growth are removed.

In its final part the Commission communication concludes that without the support of an important political and economic contribution, the continuation of the peace process, even in its present difficult state, would not have been possible. The economic goals sought in 1993 have not been reached. In the face of this grave situation the European Commission, in charge of the EU programme of economic assistance, believes that it is necessary to look for ways to continue the present financial assistance programme, which expires in 1998. However, while the Commission can make proposals in order to improve the situation, real advancement will only be possible if a number of conditions are met:

• On the bilateral side, the Palestinians must be allowed to exercise their right to economic development. Obstacles to trade and economic activity must be removed (i.e. the series of measures put in practice by Israel to seal off Palestinian territories from the outside world, usually known as closures). If the Israel-PLO Paris Economic Protocol is to subsist, then closures cannot continue.

• Furthermore, the Palestinians must have open trade access to the outside world, including Israel. This must lead to a situation that will allow the full implementation of the EC-PLO Association Agreement.

• The European Union should be willing to help Israel remove the obstacles to either solution through the Israel-EU Joint Dialogue mechanism, as stressed by the conclusions of the recent Luxembourg European Council. However, the current discussions and studies undertaken under this framework on Palestinian labour, passage of goods and people, fiscal and financial issues, Gaza airport and harbour, and medium-and long-term economic potential, cannot continue without any tangible results. The Joint Dialogue needs to make rapid progress towards eliminating all obstacles to Palestinian economic development. Failing this, the Joint Dialogue would have to be re-evaluated.

• The European Union has reaffirmed its readiness to put all its political weight to the service of safeguarding the security of Israel. The security of the State of Israel and of its citizens is a central piece in the solution to the Middle East conflict. This is one of the reasons for the European Union's support to Palestinian economic development. Contrary to claims that Israel's security demands stiff restrictions on the Palestinian economy,

Palestinian economic development will be Israel's best security guarantee, both in the short and the long term.

• In the multilateral forums, the EU, as chair of the Regional Economic Development Working Group (REDWG), should come up with concrete initiatives to revive the process of regional economic integration as soon as progress on the bilateral tracks allows. Indeed, the stalemate in the Palestinian track has had a progressive paralysing effect on the multilateral track.

• Coming to the regional dimension, and in particular the Barcelona process, a renewed EU effort to put an end to peace process contamination in the context of the development of the Euro Mediterranean goals is necessary. "Barcelona" represents a long-term strategy which is crucial to the future of both the EU and its Mediterranean partners. While it was born under a constructive phase of the peace process, its shared goals and the conditions that made it necessary are still there and are worth the effort in themselves.

• The idea launched in Malta of a mid-term review ministerial conference in 1998 must be given urgency so as to reinvigorate the process in order to prevent contamination by the peace process.

The communication ends with a reference to the complementary role of the EU alongside the leading role of the US in the process. The document explains that the EU has accepted a role which is diplomatically and politically complementary to that of the US. This is an arrangement which has worked imperfectly so far and which can be improved to boost the effect of international community's efforts to put the peace process back on track.

The Commission feels that if the European Union is to continue to be the basic economic foundation of the peace process, then what has happened until now should be taken into account. The role that the European Union has played so far should lead to the conclusion that the way in which the complementary efforts of the two allies is to be organized should be reviewed and then put to the consideration of the US, the Palestinians, the Israelis and the international community.

When submitting these proposals, the Commission does not understand them in any way as a challenge to the role of the US. The present determining role of the US, rooted in the past, will continue in the future.

Therefore, while the European Union should continue to support the crucial political role of the US, the complementarity that has guided the European Union role so far should be changed in two main ways:

· The European Union has so far played a constructive role. This role would be much improved if the parties and the US acknowledged the need for the European Union, both at ministerial level and through its Special Envoy, to participate alongside the US in all forums set up to assist bilateral negotiations between the parties.

· The European Union has contributed by itself over half of the financial resources to the peace process. Because of this, it has more experience, wider links and a considerable political capital. It understands that if the international assistance effort is to be renewed, it must be redefined. It is clear that the basic shareholder should be the key coordinator. Therefore, the international economic effort should be coordinated by the European Union on the basis of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee model: Palestinians, Israelis, the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations and the active participation of key donors.

• Being by far the first donor, the European Union (Presidency and Commission) should play a substantially enhanced role in the coordination of international assistance, according to a formula to be negotiated with other donors.

## VII. ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE ADOPTS FOUR RESOLUTIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, JERUSALEM (AL-QUDS AL-SHARIF) AND THE SITUATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

*At the Eighth Islamic Summit Conference, held in Teheran from 9 to 11 December 1997, the Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference adopted four resolutions on the question of Palestine, Jerusalem (Al-Quds Al-Sharif) and the situation of the Middle East peace process. The text of the resolutions are reproduced below (see A/53/72-S/1998/156):*

Resolution No. 1/8-P (IS) on the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict

The Eighth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference (Session of Dignity, Dialogue and Participation), held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 9 to 11 Sha'aban 1418 H (9 to 11 December 1997),

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict contained in document no. (IS/8-97/PIL/D.3);

Proceeding from the principles and objectives of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference;

Pursuant to the resolutions of the Islamic Conferences on the Cause of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict;

Recalling the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, especially resolutions 242, 338, 465, 476 and 478, and the resolutions of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the other occupied Arab territories;

Reaffirming the commitment of Islamic States to realizing a just and comprehensive peace in the region, and upholding peace as a strategic option;

Expressing its strong condemnation of Israel's continuing repressive and terrorist measures and practices, its continued policy of colonization, expansion of existing settlements, confiscation of land and properties, deportation and mass reprisal against Palestinian and Arab citizens in all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, its siege of the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the desecration of Islamic and Christian Holy Shrines;

Condemning the continuous Israeli aggression against Lebanese territories and the civilian population;

Emphasizing that the Israeli policies, practices and expansionist designs do not only threaten the Arab States and the peace process but also threaten the Islamic States and endanger international peace and security;

Holding Israel responsible for the halting of the Middle East peace process along all tracks as a

result of the intransigence of the Israeli Government and its evasion of the principles on which the peace process has been built, especially Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425, as well as the "land for peace" formula and its non-compliance with all the agreements concluded in this regard;

Expressing deep concern over the alarming situation resulting from the hindering by Israel of efforts exerted to reach a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestine cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 425, as well as the principle of "land for peace" and the realization of the national and political legitimate rights of the Palestinian people;

Commending the efforts made by the Palestine Liberation Organization throughout the occupied Palestinian territories for the reconstruction of what had been destroyed by the Israeli occupation, as well as the efforts exerted by its National Authority for the rehabilitation of the Palestinian national economy and its consolidation, on the way to the establishment of the Palestinian State on its national territory;

Determined to support these efforts through all possible means;

1. Reaffirms all the resolutions of the Islamic Conference relating to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

2. Reaffirms also that the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif is the prime cause of all Muslims, and expresses its full solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization in its just struggle for ending Israeli occupation, exercising its sovereignty over its territories and building the Palestinian national institutions on the land of Palestine, with a view to realizing the imprescriptible and inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent State on their national soil, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

3. Calls on Member States to further strengthen their solidarity with the Palestinian people, and continue to support their just and legitimate struggle for ending Israeli occupation and achieving all their goals of freedom and independence.

4. Reaffirms its support for the Middle East peace process and the implementation of all the agreements signed in this context among the parties concerned and the commitments made in accordance with the underpinnings of the Madrid Peace Conference, and in accordance with the UN Charter and the UN resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425 and the "land for peace" principle, which demand Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the occupied Syrian Golan back to the 4 June 1967 borderline, the occupied Lebanese territory back to internationally recognized borders and the realization of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people.

5. Reaffirms that Al-Quds Al-Sharif forms an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967 and whatever is applicable to other occupied Palestinian territories also applies to it, in implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council and the UN General Assembly and calls for combining efforts to restore Al-Quds Al-Sharif to Palestinian sovereignty as the capital of the State of Palestine, so as to ensure peace and security in the region.

6. Calls on the international community, in particular the two sponsors of the peace process to pressure Israel into complying with the resolutions

of the international legitimacy, and implementing UN General Assembly resolution ES-10-2 of 24 April 1997 and ES-10/3 of 15 July 1997 regarding halting the building of a new settlement at Jebel Abu Ghneim as well as all other settlement activity, including expansion of existing settlements, building side roads, confiscating land adjacent to settlements, and activities which constitute a violation of international resolutions. It also requests Member States to make efforts to get the UN General Assembly to take necessary steps in accordance with the "United for Peace" resolution in the event Israel fails to comply with the two aforementioned resolutions.

7. Requests the UN Security Council to revitalize the International Commission on Supervision and Control to prevent colonization in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories in accordance with its resolution 446.

8. Urges the international community and all States that extend economic and financial assistance to Israel, in particular the United States of America, and the States of the European Union, as well as international donor institutions and funds, to cease assistance which is used by Israel to implement its colonialist and expansionist designs in the occupied Arab territories and the occupied Syrian Golan.

9. Rejects attempts to disregard the obligations of the transitional phase and jump to the negotiations on the final status, and demands the faithful and honest implementation of all the remaining items of the transitional phase agreements concluded between the PLO and Israel.

10. Affirms that Israel's disregard for the principles and underpinnings of the peace process, backtracking on the commitments, pledges and agreements made in the framework of this process, procrastination and evasion have seriously undermined the peace process, and holds the Israeli Government responsible for this situation.

11. Strongly condemns the Israeli crimes which harm the religious sentiments of Muslims and Christians, and which contradict religious, human and moral values.

12. Urges Islamic States which have begun to take steps towards establishing relations with Israel within the framework of the peace process to reconsider their relationships with Israel, including the closing of missions and offices until Israel abides by the UN resolutions and implement the agreements, obligations and commitments arrived at by the parties to the peace process, in accordance with the principles adopted by the Madrid Conference, the Oslo Accord and the other agreements concluded with the PLO, as well as obligations and commitments arrived at with the Arab parties on all tracks during the peace talks.

13. Calls for action within UN and international institutions and forums to compel Israel to release the detainees; return the deportees; halt the methods of mass punishment; cease the confiscation of lands and properties and the demolition of homes ; also cease any actions that threaten life and the environment in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

14. Calls for a more effective UN action to ensure the success of the Middle East peace process, for a reaffirmation of the continued UN responsibility for the cause of Palestine until a just and comprehensive solution to all its aspects is found, a solution that puts an end to occupation and fulfils the imprescriptible and inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their land, self-determination and the establishment of their independent State on their territory with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

15. Urges all States and concerned parties to extend their support to the international programme on economic, social and cultural development in the occupied Palestinian territories to avail the Palestinian people of the necessary approved assistance for the reconstruction of its national economy and to back up its national institutions and enable it to establish its independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

16. Affirms the need to intensify the efforts being made for holding a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, regarding the protection of civilians during the time of war, aimed at taking the necessary enforcement measures to ensure the application of the Convention to the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

17. Calls for abiding by the provisions of the Islamic boycott against Israel and to consider the legislation, rules and provisions governing the boycott, "the General Principles of the Boycott, Islamic Law, the Internal Regulations and Sessional Meetings of the Regional Offices", as part of the current national legislations, and set up the necessary offices and mechanisms to serve that end.

18. Strongly condemns Israel's continuing occupation of Southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa region, its arbitrary practices and military acts of aggression against the Lebanese citizens and against the Palestinian refugees in their camps in Lebanon; calls upon the UN Security Council to take the necessary measures to put an immediate end to these acts of aggression; calls for the implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Lebanon, especially resolution 495 (1978), and Israel's immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal from the Lebanese territory. It affirms its resolve to maintain the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders.

19. Strongly condemns the policy of Israel in refusing to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981), and in imposing its jurisdiction, its laws and its administration on the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as Israel's policies of annexation, establishment of settlements, expropriation of lands, diversion of water resources and imposition of Israeli nationality on Syrian citizens. It considers that all those measures are null and void, and constitute a violation of the rules and principles of international law relating to occupation and war and particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. It demands the complete withdrawal of Israel from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967.

20. Calls on the international community and the Security Council to compel Israel to comply with UN resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 487 (1981), to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to implement General Assembly and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolutions calling for the subjection of all Israeli atomic facilities to the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards System, to obtain Israel's renunciation of nuclear armament, and to submit a full report on its capabilities and stockpiles of nuclear weapons and ammunition to the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency as those steps are essential for the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, and primarily nuclear weapons in the Middle East region, a fundamental factor for the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

21. Reaffirms the continued responsibility of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to carry on fulfilling the tasks assigned to it for the benefit of all the Palestinian citizens wherever they may be living in accordance with the resolutions of the UN General Assembly in this regard, and calls upon the

Member States to request the UN Secretary-General to see to it that the Conciliation Committee undertakes in collaboration with the Relief Agency and the concerned States the preparation of a comprehensive inventory of Palestinian refugees and their property and come out with a integrated conception for the settlement of their problems on the basis of their right to return to their homeland, Palestine, in accordance with the UN Resolution A/RES/194 (III) of 11 December 1948. It further calls on all States to provide more assistance towards the Agency's budget so as to enable it continue providing its services.

22. Requests the Secretary-General to take necessary measures for continuing and strengthening contacts and coordination on the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the European Union and the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and expresses its appreciation for their all supportive stands and assistance for the just struggle of the Palestinian people.

23. Requests the Secretary General to follow up the implementation of this resolution and to submit a report thereon to the ninth session of the Islamic Summit Conference.

Resolution No. 218-P (IS) on the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif

The Eighth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference (Session of Dignity, Dialogue and Participation), held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 9 to 11 Sha'aban 1418 H (9 to 11 December 1997),

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, contained in document no. (IS/8-97/PIL/D.3);

Proceeding from the principles and objectives of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference;

Pursuant to the Islamic resolutions which reaffirm that the issue of Al-Quds Al-Sharif constitutes the essence of the Palestinian cause which forms the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that no comprehensive and just peace can be achieved without the return of Al-Quds Al-Sharif to Palestinian sovereignty, as the capital of the State of Palestine;

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council, in particular resolutions 465, 476 and 478 on the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif;

Reaffirming the resolutions of the tenth extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly ES-10/2 and ES-10/3 of 24 April 1997 and 15 July 1997, respectively, on the illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Al-Quds and the other occupied Palestinian territories;

Expressing its deep concern at the escalation of Israel's acts of aggression against the Holy Places in the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and other Palestinian cities and violation of their sanctity;

Reiterating all Security Council resolutions on Al-Quds, including 681, which provides for the applicability of all the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 concerning the protection of civilians in times of war to the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif;

Strongly condemning all illegal Israeli measures and practices, which also contravene all international resolutions and laws, carried out by the Israeli occupation authorities in Al-Quds Al-Sharif aimed at Judaizing the Holy City and obliterating its Arab and Islamic landmarks;

Commending the constant efforts made by the Al-Quds Committee under the Chairmanship of His Majesty King Hassan II, King of Morocco;

Commending also the continuous efforts made by all the Islamic Member States to defend the sanctity of the Islamic places in the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, to safeguard their Arabic identity and their Islamic character, and protect them from Zionist misuse and Judaization plans;

Commending the contribution of His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, to the renovation work carried out in the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Dome of the Rock;

1. Reaffirms all the resolutions adopted by the relevant Islamic Conferences, including the Third Islamic Summit Conference on Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the recommendations and decisions of the Al-Quds Committee at its previous sessions.

2. Reaffirms that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories foremost of which Al-Quds Al-Sharif as it forms an integral part of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and that whatever is applicable to the rest of the occupied territories applies to it in implementation of UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

3. Urges action to halt all practices and measures undertaken by the Israeli occupation authorities in Al-Quds Al-Sharif aimed at altering the geographical and demographic conditions and violating the sanctity of the Islamic and Christian shrines in order to Judaize the Holy City. It calls for combined efforts to restore Al-Quds Al-Sharif to Palestinian sovereignty as the capital of the State of Palestine so as to ensure peace and security in the region.

4. Invites the Member States to continue their support to the Palestine Liberation Organization in the ongoing negotiations for the transfer of all powers and responsibilities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, to the Palestinian National Authority, to support the steadfastness of the citizens of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, to establish developmental economic, cultural, social and architectural projects and construct housing units for them, to restore their existing houses and to support the national Palestinian institutions in Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

5. Invites States of the world to refrain from having any dealings with the Israeli occupation authorities which might be interpreted in any way by those authorities as an implicit recognition of the fait accompli imposed by the proclamation of Al-Quds as the capital of Israel.

6. Further invites the international community, and in particular the two co-sponsors of the peace process, to compel Israel not to effect any geographical or demographic alterations in the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif during the transitional period and to refrain from any action or measure that may affect the outcome of the negotiations on the final status of the City, adhere to the relevant international resolutions, lift the siege imposed on Al-Quds Al-Sharif, ensure the freedom of worship therein, and refrain from destroying houses, withdrawing identity cards of Palestinian citizens and emptying Al-Quds Al-Sharif of its Arab citizens.

7. Reaffirms that all legislative, administrative and colonization measures aimed at altering the legal status of the Holy City are null and void and contrary to the resolutions of international legality, and to international agreements, conventions and norms, as well as to the agreements signed between the Palestinian and Israeli parties. It calls on the international community, in particular the two cosponsors of the peace process, to pressure Israel into complying with the resolutions of the international legality and implement General Assembly resolution ES-10/3 of 15 July 1997 regarding the cessation of building work on a Jewish settlement at Jebel Abu Ghuneim as well as all other settlement activity, including expansion of existing settlements, building of side roads, confiscating land adjacent to settlements and related activities, which constitute a violation of Security Council resolutions.

8. Strongly condemns Israel's persistence in the excavation works around Al-Haram Al-Quds Al-Sharif, especially the opening of a tunnel in Al-Quds Al-Sharif which endangers the Islamic and Christian Holy Shrines especially the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. It appeals to the international community to compel Israel to close down this tunnel in accordance with resolution 1073 of the Security Council.

9. Strongly condemns the Israeli Supreme Court's decisions, particularly the decision adopted on 25 July 1996 allowing Jews to pray in the precinct of the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the decision issued on 23 September 1993, claiming the Blessed Mosque of Al-Aqsa as part of the territory of the State of Israel, and considers it as premeditated provocations aimed at opening the way for the Zionist extremist organizations to continue their violations against the sanctity of the Blessed Mosque of Al-Aqsa to establish their presence in its precincts, and to continue looting the religious, historical and cultural relics in Al-Quds and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

10. Strongly condemns Israel for the orders it has issued for closing the Palestinian institutions in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and preventing them from operating freely, and considers such arbitrary measures as a continued violation of the agreements concluded between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israeli parties within the framework of the peace process, as well as a blatant violation of international conventions and agreements, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and a breach of the principles and underpinnings of the Madrid Peace Process.

11. Calls upon all States to adhere to Security Council resolution 478 (1980), which invites the Member States to uphold the provisions of the said resolution and refrain from transferring their diplomatic missions to the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. Takes note with appreciation of the general response of the States of the world to this resolution and their compliance with it.

12. Condemns the decision of the US House of Representatives to recognize Al-Quds as the united capital of Israel and to transfer the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Al-Quds, and considers it a serious provocation to the sentiments of Muslims and all believers in the world, as well as a blatant violation of the principles of international legality and the stand of the international community, and a glaring contradiction to the role of the United States of America as a sponsor of the peace process, besides being an encouragement to Israel to pursue its aggressive expansionist policy; and calls on the US Administration to adhere to Security Council resolution 478.

13. Commends the efforts made by Al-Quds Committee, under the chairmanship of His Majesty

King Hassan II, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco, affirms all resolutions adopted by the Committee and urges Member States to apply them.

14. Expresses its satisfaction with the commencement of the work of the Al-Quds Fund and welcomes the measures taken by His Majesty King Hassan II, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, with regard to the appointment of an Executive Director of the Fund and his assistant, and to the setting up of an Administrative Division for the Agency and its headquarters in Casablanca.

15. Emphasizes the need to continue coordination action and by Member States with regional and international organizations for the implementation of the international resolutions adopted by United Nations and its specialized agencies, in particular UNESCO, and also coordination with the League of Arab States, and the holding of conferences to promote the cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and highlight the dangers surrounding it.

16. Invites the Vatican, the Eastern and other Christian Churches to take part in the resistance against the Judaization of Al-Quds Al-Sharif out of respect for the spiritual dimension of all religions, for the sake of peaceful coexistence among them, and in compliance with Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, which demands that Israel withdraw from the part occupied in 1967, including the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, as well as other Security Council resolutions in particular:

- 465 of 1 March 1980, which affirms the illegality of building Israeli settlements in that part and demands their dismantlement and removal;

- 476 of 30 June 1980, which affirms that all measures that have changed the features of the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its geographical, demographic and historical status are null and void and must be rescinded in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council;

- and 478 of 20 August 1980, which decided not to recognize the "Basic Law" and other Israeli acts that aim to change the features and status of Al-Quds. It also decided to call on the States that had established diplomatic missions in Al-Quds to withdraw those missions from the Holy City. It further called for the support of the inhabitants of Al-Quds Al-Sharif so they can resist the Judaization measures aimed at uprooting them from their City.

17. Calls upon the Security Council to take necessary measures that ensure compliance with its resolutions on Al-Quds in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

18. Reaffirms the resolutions of earlier Islamic Conferences which call for the support of the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the consolidation of the steadfastness of its citizens, and also calls for the support of Baitul Mal of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the Al-Quds Fund.

19. Requests the Secretary-General to follow up the implementation of this resolution and to submit a report thereon to the ninth session of the Islamic Summit Conference.

Resolution No. 5/8-P (IS) on the Al-Quds Fund and its Waqf

The Eighth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference (Session of Dignity, Dialogue and Participation) held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 8 to 10 Sha'aban 1418 H (9 to 11 December 1997),

Proceeding from the principles and objectives of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference;

Referring to all the Islamic resolutions adopted on the Al-Quds Fund and its Waqf;

Reaffirming the principle of consolidating Islamic solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just and legitimate struggle;

Paying tribute to Member States that regularly fulfil their obligations and make donations to the Al-Quds Fund and its Waqf;

Appreciating the significance of the vital role played by the Al-Quds Fund and its Waqf to support the steadfastness and jihad of the Palestinian people within the occupied Palestinian territories, and particularly the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif;

Noting with deep concern Israel's continued pursuit of its aggressive, expansionist and settlement policy;

Commending the positive role played by the Governing Board of the Al-Quds Fund in quest of financial resources to promote the Fund and its Waqf;

1. Reaffirms all previous relevant resolutions adopted by successive Islamic Conferences.

2. Reiterates all recommendations and resolutions of the earlier meetings of the Governing Board of the Al-Quds Fund.

3. Expresses its profound thanks and appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the continued support to the Al-Quds Fund, which falls within the framework of their consistent solicitude towards the foremost cause of the Islamic Ummah, namely the cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and Palestine. It commends the annual appeal made by H.R.H. Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz, Emir of the Province of Riyadh and Chairman of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Supreme Committee for the Welfare of the Palestinian Freedom Fighters, to citizens and residents to make donations to the Al-Quds Fund. It urges member States to continue their donations campaign in favour of the Al-Quds Fund and its Waqf, together with the appropriate directives to the public and other media to conduct a special campaign for this purpose.

4. Calls upon member States to continue their support to the Palestine Liberation Organization, especially at this decisive stage, for the consolidation of its national authority over all occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, capital of the independent Palestinian State, and to extend all forms of support to the Palestinian people so they can build their institutions and national economy.

5. Commends the positive role played by the Al-Quds Fund in supporting the steadfastness and boosting the struggle of the Palestinian people.

6. Requests the Secretary-General to follow up the implementation of this resolution.

## Resolution No. 6/8-P(IS) on the current situation of the peace process, the Middle East

The Eighth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference (Session of Dignity, Dialogue and Participation), held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 9 to 11 Sha'aban 1418 H (9 to 11 December 1997),

Referring to the declaration on the current situation of the peace process in the Middle East issued by the Twenty-Fourth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 98 Rajab to 3 Sha'aban 1417 H (9 to 12 December

1996) as well as to the declaration on the question of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Arab-Israeli conflict issued by the Extraordinary Meeting of the Islamic Summit Conference held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 13 Dhul Qaada 1417 H (23 March 1997), and to the Final Declaration issued by the 16th Session of Al-Quds Committee held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, on 17 Dhul Qaada 1417 H (27 March 1997);

Having examined the serious and urgent situation entailed by the policies of the incumbent Israeli Government which are hostile to peace;

1. Reaffirms its continued solidarity with the Palestinian people for the recovery of its legitimate and inalienable national rights, including its right to return, to self-determination, and to the establishment of its independent State on its national territory, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

2. Reaffirms its full support to the peace processin the Middle East and its commitment to the foundations and principles of the peace process, and demands that Israel respect and implement the commitments, obligations and agreements reached within the framework of the process in accordance with the principles adopted at the Madrid Conference and consistent with United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 475, and the land-for-peace formula which guarantees Israeli withdrawal from all Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Golan Heights of Syria, to the lines of 4 June 1967, and from occupied Southern Lebanon and the occupied western Bekaa to the internationally recognized borders.

3. Calls on the co-sponsors of the peace process and the international community to be wary of the grave dangers resulting from Israel's pursuance of positions and policies hostile to peace.

4. Strongly denounces the Israeli Government's policy and practices which are hostile to peace and are designed to undermine the peace process in order to pursue its colonization of Arab and Palestinian territories, including the City of Al-Quds, and invalidate the foundations and terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference, and evade the commitments, pledges and agreements reached in the past five years of peace talks with the Palestinian and other Arab parties.

5. Expresses strong condemnation and anger about the threats voiced by Israeli officials for the purpose of reinstating the atmosphere of war in the region and imposing the fait accompli on Arabs and Muslims.

6. Urges the member States which have started to take steps towards establishing relations with Israel within the framework of the peace process to reconsider their relations with Israel, including the closing of missions and offices until Israel complies with the relevant UN resolutions, in particular, the full Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, and safeguards the national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and implements the agreements and commitments reached by the parties to the peace process.

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